

New Pet Craze in Japan

Pre-Reading Activities

A: Matching

Match the animal names with the names they are called when they are babies.

Animal	Baby Animal Names
1. cat	a. calf
2. cow	b. fawn
3. dog	c. kid
4. goat	d. cub
5. pig	e. kitten
6. sheep	f. chick
7. lion	g. lamb
8. chicken	h. piglet
9. deer	i. polliwog
10. frog	j. puppy
11. whale	k. colt
12. bear	
13. horse	

(1 point each) Score _____ /13

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____ 7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____ 10. ____ 11. ____ 12. ____ 13. ____

B: Vocabulary

Today's article uses many adjectives to describe one of the animals listed above. Divide the following adjectives into those that describe: (a) appearance; and (b) personality.

(1 point each) Score _____ /11

miniature; svelte; tiny; sweet natured; portly; nice; fat; round; petite; earnest; undersized

(a) appearance: _____

(b) personality: _____

Reading Activities

A: Scanning

Each of the following sentences has one mistake. Read Part One of the article with your group out loud. Then, write a correct sentence.

(2 points each) Score _____ /10

1. Unemployment is decreasing in Japan.

2. Mini pigs are adored because of their serious nature.

3. Emi Ito works in Saitama, south of Tokyo.

4. She has been a mini-pig breeder for seven years.

5. Mini pigs were bred for use as farm animals.

Part One

TOKYO Tue Dec 10 (Reuters) - Depressed by rising unemployment and an uncertain future, more and more Japanese are turning to an unlikely source of solace -- miniature pigs.

The latest boom in the Japanese pet world, the tiny porkers are adored for their sweet nature and portly shapes.

"They are nice and fat, but also very lovable," said Emi Ito, who works at Saiboku Livestock Farm Corp in Saitama, just north of Tokyo, and has been a mini-pig fan for seven years.

"They're really comforting and round -- and anything that comforts people is very popular in Japan right now."

The pigs -- originally bred for use as laboratory animals -- are about one tenth to one fifth the size of the normal livestock variety. (Continued/...)



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B: Matching Details

With your group, read Part Two of the article out loud. Then, match the following numbers with their explanation.

(1 point each) Score ____/5

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| a. 200 - 300 | 1. ____ The number of people who currently own mini pigs. |
| b. 110 - 132 | 2. ____ The maximum weight (in pounds) of the mini pigs. |
| c. 90 | 3. ____ The number of people who owned mini pigs earlier this year. |
| d. 500 - 600 | 4. ____ The minimum weight (in pounds) of the mini pigs. |
| e. 45 | 5. ____ The percentage of people looking for information about mini pigs on the homepage. |

Part Two

(.../Continued)

But "miniature" is a relative term.

Mini pigs tip the scales anywhere from a svelte 45 pounds (20 kg) up to 110-132 pounds (50-60 kg), making them difficult to keep in narrow Japanese homes.

Despite this, the number of people -- mainly women -- who own one of the petite porkers has roughly doubled to around 500-600 from some 200-300 early this year.

"I think a lot of people also saw the movie 'Babe' and were taken with the earnest nature of the main character," Ito said.

Nearly 90 percent of hits on the "Pig University" homepage she runs are from people seeking information about the undersized piggies, and she is kept busy answering their questions and dispensing tips about porcine care.

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C: True or False

Now read the whole article again and decide whether the statements below are true (T) or false (F). (1 point each) Score ____/8

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Some Japanese people are getting mini pigs as pets because they are unhappy. | T | F |
| 2. Mini pigs are much smaller than normal pigs. | T | F |
| 3. Mini pigs are easy to keep in Japanese homes because they are so small. | T | F |
| 4. Most people who own mini pigs are men. | T | F |
| 5. The number of people owning mini pigs is increasing quickly. | T | F |
| 6. People like the appearance but not the personality of the mini pigs. | T | F |
| 7. Emi Ito runs the Pig University homepage. | T | F |
| 8. Most people who log into the Pig University homepage want to know about mini pigs. | T | F |

Post-Reading Activities

Language

A: Vocabulary

Prefixes: **Un-** is a prefix which is used to give words a negative meaning, e.g. **un** employment = no job; **un** certain = not certain; **un** likely = not likely. Write the words which have the following negative meanings and then put the correct word into the sentences below.

(1 point each) Score _____ /8

a. not happy b. not friendly c. not kind d. not known e. not lucky f. not official g. not popular h. not selfish

1. Tom was _____ with his teachers because of his bad behavior.
2. The location of the gold is _____.
3. He was _____ after he lost his watch.
4. It was _____ of her to share her food.
5. The people in the town were _____ to strangers.
6. Helen was _____ when the tree fell on her car.
7. The result of the election is still _____.
8. It is _____ to talk about her weight problem.

B: Numbers

The (mini) pigs ...are about one tenth (1/10) to one fifth (1/5) the size of the normal livestock variety.

This means they are only 10% to 20% as big as normal pigs.

Match the expressions on the left with the correct percentage on the right.

(1 point each) Score _____ /6

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| a. two fifths the size | 1. _____ 200% as big |
| b. half the size | 2. _____ 75% as big |
| c. one quarter the size | 3. _____ 40% as big |
| d. three quarters the size | 4. _____ 300% as big |
| e. double the size | 5. _____ 25% as big |
| f. triple the size | 6. _____ 50% as big |

C: Writing

Imagine you own a pet shop that sells miniature pigs. With your group, write a short radio commercial for mini pigs.

Score _____ /10

D: New Words In the “Additional New Words and Expressions” section of your Reading Journal, add all the words you did not know in today’s worksheet.

*****When you are finished, check your own answers and write your scores!*****

Answers to Check your Work

Pre-Reading Activities

Activity A: 1. e 2. a 3. j 4. c 5. h 6. g 7. d 8. f 9. b 10. i 11. a 12. d 13. k

Activity B: appearance: miniature, svelte, tiny, portly, fat, round, petite, undersize
personality: sweet natured, nice, earnest

Reading Activities

Activity A: 1. Unemployment is **rising** (decreasing) in Japan. 2. Mini pigs are adored because of their **earnest** (serious) nature.
3. Emi Ito works in Saitama, **north** (south) of Tokyo. 4. She has been a mini-pig **fan** (breeder) for seven years.
5. Mini pigs were bred for use as **lab** (farm) animals.

Activity B: 1. d 2. b 3. a 4. e 5. c

Activity C: 1. True 2. True 3. False (Mini pigs are not very small and most Japanese homes are narrow.) 4. False (Most owners are women.) 5. True 6. False (People like the mini pig's personality.) 7. True 8. True.

Activity D: 1. unpopular 2. unknown 3. unhappy 4. unselfish 5. unlucky 6. unfriendly/unkind 7. unofficial 8. unkind

Post-Reading Activities

Activity A: 1. e 2. d 3. a 4. f 5. c 6. b